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JOB VACANCIES, AUSTRALIA, FEBRUARY 1983

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MAIN FEATURES

The continual decline in the number of job vacancies evident since November 1981 was arrested in February 1983 when the estimated number of vacancies stood at 16,900. The slight increase since November 1982 is not statistically significant.

Job vacancies in the private sector were estimated to be 7,200 compared with 5,800 in November 1982 and 20,600 in February 1982.

There were about 4 vacancies for each 1,000 jobs (ie filled plus unfilled) in February 1983 compared to 8 vacancies for each 1,000 jobs in February 1982.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

The ABS conducted sample surveys of employers by mail in March each year from 1974 to 1978. Quarterly surveys, designed for the collection of a limited amount of data by telephone from a relatively small sample of employers, were introduced in May 1977, suspended in May 1978 and reintroduced in May 1979. They are conducted as at the third Friday of the month.

Scope and coverage

2. The surveys cover vacancies in private employment and in Australian, State and local government employment. All vacancies (as defined in paragraph 6) for wage and salary earners are included except those:

- (a) in the defence forces
- (b) in agriculture
- (c) in private households employing staff
- (d) for employees of private employers (other than hospitals) not subject to payroll tax. These employees comprise about 15 per cent of total civilian employees.

3. Commencing with the May 1981 survey the sample has been reselected from updated lists of payroll taxpayers and government organisations. At the time of reselection the levels of exemption from payroll tax were \$60,000 a year in wages and salaries in Tasmania, \$72,000 in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, \$84,000 in Victoria and \$150,000 in Queensland and the Northern Territory. At the time of the selection of the sample for previous surveys the exemption level was \$60,000 in all States and Territories except Queensland, where it was \$125,000.

Sample design

4. Respondents included in the survey were selected from lists of private and government employers stratified by State, industry and number of employees. Employers with 1,200 or more employees were fully enumerated and a sample was selected from the remainder of employers. The total number of employers in the survey was about 3,100.

5. The small size of the sample has imposed some restrictions on the amount of detail that can be published. Estimates are provided, for each State and Territory, of vacancies in manufacturing and other industries, together with job vacancy rates. Estimates of the number of job vacancies in selected industries are also provided, for Australia only.

Definitions

6. A *job vacancy* is a job available for immediate filling on the survey date and for which recruitment action had been taken by the employer. Recruitment action includes efforts to fill vacancies by advertising, by factory notices, by notifying government or private employment agencies or trade unions and by contacting, interviewing or selecting applicants already registered with the enterprise or organisation. Excluded are jobs available only to existing employees of the organisation. In this context the Australian Public Service and the Public Services of the States and the Northern Territory are treated as 'organisations'. Also excluded are vacancies

- (a) of less than one day's duration
- (b) to be filled by persons already hired or by promotion or transfer of existing employees

(c) to be filled by employees returning from paid or unpaid leave or after industrial disputes

(d) not available for immediate filling on the survey date

(e) not available within the particular State or Territory to which the return relates

(f) for work carried out under contract

(g) for which no effort is being made to fill the position.

7. The *job vacancy rate* is calculated by expressing the number of job vacancies as a percentage of the number of employees plus vacancies.

Discontinuity of series

8. In the series up to May 1978, vacancies in the government sector referred to all those that were not restricted to persons already employed within a *particular department or authority*. From May 1979 they refer only to those vacancies which are not restricted to persons already employed within a *particular government sector*, e.g. a State Public Service or the Australian Public Service. This change has had a significant effect on the estimates for the Australian Capital Territory.

9. Vacancies of less than one day's duration have been excluded. This may have had some slight effect on comparability with the results of surveys in the period to May 1978.

Reliability of the estimates

10. Since the estimates in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample of employers, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the information had been obtained from all employers within the scope of the survey. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of employers was included in the survey. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all employers had been included and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

11. Standard errors of Australian estimates are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Standard errors of estimates for States and Territories are generally not greater than 20 per cent. The standard errors of the differences between quarterly estimates are approximately the same as the standard errors of the estimates themselves. The reselection of the sample may also have had some effect on movements in the estimates.

12. An example of the use of standard errors is as follows. The survey estimate of the number of job vacancies in Australia in February 1983 is 16,900. From Table 1 it will be seen that the standard error of this estimate is 1,300 and therefore there are about two chances in three that the value that would have been produced if all employers within the scope of the survey had been included will be within the range 15,600 to 18,200, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the value will be within the range 14,300 to 19,500.

Seasonal factors

13. Job vacancy figures at different dates may be affected by seasonal influences. Publication of seasonally adjusted figures will not be possible until results of surveys for several years are available.

Related publications

14. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available on request :

Unemployment, Australia (Preliminary Estimates) (6201.0)

The Labour Force, Australia (Preliminary) (6202.0)

The Labour Force, Australia (6203.0)

Civilian Employees, Australia (6213.0)

Job Vacancies, May 1978 (6231.0)

15. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

Symbols and other usages

— nil or rounded to zero

* subject to sampling variability too high for most practical purposes

16. Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

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Australian Statistician

TABLE 1. JOB VACANCIES AND JOB VACANCY RATES(a)

Month	Number of vacancies ('000)			Job vacancy rate(a) (per cent)
	Manu- facturing (b)	Other industries (c)	Total	
1980—				
February	11.3	25.7	36.9	0.9
May	9.1	20.7	29.8	0.7
August	9.7	20.4	30.1	0.7
November	9.2	25.1	34.3	0.8
1981—				
February	10.4	23.1	33.5	0.8
May	10.0	25.7	35.7	0.8
August	9.7	25.0	34.7	0.8
November	9.8	26.9	36.7	0.9
1982—				
February	9.3	24.4	33.7	0.8
May	4.9	20.4	25.3	0.6
August	3.7	17.8	21.5	0.5
November	1.8	14.6	16.4	0.4
1983—				
February	2.1	14.9	16.9	0.4
Standard error of estimates and of quarterly movements	0.6	1.3	1.3	0.04

(a) For definitions see paragraphs 6 and 7. (b) Australian Standard Industrial Classification (ASIC) Division C. (c) ASIC Divisions A to L excluding Division C (Manufacturing), Subdivisions 01, 02 (agriculture, etc.), 94 (private households employing staff) and defence forces.

TABLE 2. JOB VACANCIES (a) : INDUSTRY
('000)

Industry	November 1981	February 1982	May 1982	August 1982	November 1982	February 1983	Standard error (b)
Manufacturing(c)—							
Metal products, machinery and equipment—							
Basic metal and fabricated metal products;							
other machinery, etc.	3.6	3.1	1.2	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.2
Transport equipment	1.9	1.8	0.9	0.8	0.3		
Total	5.4	4.9	2.0	1.3	0.8		
Other manufacturing	4.3	4.4	2.9	2.4	1.0	1.4	0.4
Total manufacturing	9.8	9.3	4.9	3.7	1.8	2.1	0.4
Electricity, gas and water	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.4	—
Wholesale and retail trade	7.0	5.1	3.3	3.6	1.4	2.3	0.7
Transport and storage; communication	1.8	1.4	1.7	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.2
Public administration; community services(d)	8.8	9.1	9.4	8.7	8.4	8.8	0.9
Mining	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.4	3.0	0.7
Other(e)	7.4	7.1	4.8	3.4	3.2		
Total	36.7	33.7	25.3	21.5	16.4	16.9	1.3

(a) For definitions see paragraphs 6 and 7. (b) Applicable to both the estimates and the quarterly movements. See paragraphs 10 to 12. (c) ASIC Division C. (d) Excludes defence forces. (e) ASIC Divisions A, E, I and L excluding Subdivisions 01, 02 (agriculture etc.) and 94 (private households employing staff).

TABLE 3. JOB VACANCIES AND JOB VACANCY RATES (a), STATES AND TERRITORIES

Month	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Australia
JOB VACANCIES (' 000)									
Total—									
1981—February	15.0	8.4	3.8	(b)2.1	2.3	0.6	0.5	0.8	33.5
May	18.5	8.3	3.1	1.0	3.2	0.5	0.7	0.5	35.7
August	18.3	8.1	2.8	0.9	(b)2.9	0.6	0.6	0.5	34.7
November	17.2	8.2	4.4	(b)2.0	2.9	0.7	0.6	0.7	36.7
1982—February	13.9	8.4	6.0	1.5	2.0	0.7	0.1	0.9	33.7
May	9.0	7.6	3.9	1.2	(b)2.2	(b)0.4	0.2	0.8	25.3
August	7.4	6.9	3.1	1.0	(b)1.7	(b)0.5	0.4	0.6	21.5
November	5.9	4.3	2.7	0.8	(b)1.2	(b)0.5	0.3	0.8	16.4
1983—February	5.8	5.8	1.9	0.7	*	0.4	0.4	0.6	16.9
Manufacturing(c)—									
1981—February	4.9	2.6	(b)0.8	*	(b)0.5	*	—	—	10.4
May	5.6	2.9	(b)0.4	(b)0.5	(b)0.5	*	—	—	10.0
August	4.9	3.3	0.7	0.3	(b)0.4	(b)0.1	—	—	9.7
November	4.7	3.0	(b)0.7	0.8	*	0.1	—	—	9.8
1982—February	4.1	3.1	*	0.5	(b)0.3	(b)0.1	—	—	9.3
May	2.0	1.9	(b)0.5	0.2	(b)0.2	0.1	—	—	4.9
August	1.5	*	0.2	0.2	*	*	—	—	3.7
November	(b)0.5	(b)0.8	0.2	0.2	*	*	—	—	1.8
1983—February	(b)0.7	(b)1.0	*	*	0.1	*	—	—	2.1
Other industries(d)—									
1981—February	10.1	(b)5.8	3.0	0.7	1.8	0.5	0.4	0.8	23.1
May	12.8	5.4	2.7	(b)0.5	(b)2.7	0.4	(b)0.7	0.5	25.7
August	13.5	4.8	2.1	(b)0.6	(b)2.3	0.5	0.6	0.5	25.0
November	(b)12.5	5.2	3.7	*	2.4	(b)0.7	0.6	0.7	26.9
1982—February	9.9	5.3	4.8	(b)1.0	1.7	0.6	0.1	0.9	24.4
May	7.0	5.6	3.4	(b)0.9	(b)2.0	(b)0.4	0.2	0.8	20.4
August	5.9	5.4	2.9	(b)0.8	(b)1.5	(b)0.3	0.4	0.6	17.8
November	5.4	3.5	2.5	0.6	(b)1.2	(b)0.4	0.3	0.8	14.6
1983—February	5.0	4.8	1.8	0.6	*	0.3	0.4	0.6	14.9
Private—									
1981—February	10.2	(b)5.4	1.8	*	1.7	(b)0.2	0.2	*	21.2
May	11.0	5.5	1.8	(b)0.8	(b)2.3	(b)0.2	*	(b)0.1	22.0
August	10.8	5.6	1.2	(b)0.6	(b)2.0	(b)0.2	(b)0.3	0.1	20.8
November	(b)12.1	4.7	2.4	(b)1.5	(b)1.7	(b)0.2	0.3	*	23.1
1982—February	9.0	4.8	(b)4.2	(b)1.2	0.9	(b)0.3	(b)0.1	*	20.6
May	5.3	3.4	2.6	(b)0.8	*	(b)0.1	(b)0.1	*	13.4
August	(b)4.7	(b)2.9	(b)1.7	*	*	*	*	*	11.0
November	(b)2.5	(b)1.3	(b)1.0	0.3	*	(b)0.1	*	—	5.8
1983—February	2.7	2.5	(b)0.7	(b)0.2	*	*	*	—	7.2
Government—									
1981—February	4.8	*	2.0	*	(b)0.6	0.4	0.3	0.7	12.3
May	(b)7.4	2.8	1.3	0.3	0.8	(b)0.3	0.3	0.5	13.6
August	7.6	2.6	1.6	0.3	0.9	(b)0.4	0.3	0.4	14.0
November	5.1	3.5	2.0	0.4	1.2	(b)0.5	0.3	0.6	13.6
1982—February	5.0	3.6	1.8	0.4	(b)1.1	(b)0.4	0.1	0.8	13.1
May	3.7	4.2	1.4	0.4	(b)1.1	*	0.2	0.6	11.9
August	2.7	4.0	1.5	0.5	(b)0.8	(b)0.3	0.3	0.5	10.5
November	3.3	3.0	1.6	0.5	(b)0.9	*	0.2	0.8	10.6
1983—February	(b)3.1	3.3	1.1	0.5	*	(b)0.3	0.3	0.6	9.8
JOB VACANCY RATES (per cent)									
1979—August	0.9	0.8	0.7	(b)0.6	0.5	(b)0.5	1.5	1.1	0.8
November	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.8	1.5	1.2	0.8
1980—February	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.7	(b)0.8	(b)2.5	1.1	0.9
May	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.7	1.7	1.1	0.7
August	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.8	1.7	1.1	0.7
November	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.7	2.3	1.0	0.8
1981—February	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.5	1.6	1.1	0.8
May	1.2	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.9	0.4	2.3	0.7	0.8
August	1.2	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.8	0.5	1.9	0.6	0.8
November	1.1	0.7	0.8	(b)0.5	0.8	0.6	1.9	0.9	0.9
1982—February	0.9	0.8	1.1	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	1.2	0.8
May	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.3	(b)0.6	(b)0.4	0.7	1.0	0.6
August	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.2	(b)0.5	(b)0.4	1.2	0.8	0.5
November	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.2	(b)0.3	(b)0.4	0.9	1.0	0.4
1983—February	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.2	(b)0.4	(b)0.4	0.2	0.8	0.4

(a) For definitions see paragraphs 6 and 7. (b) Standard error greater than 20 per cent but less than 30 per cent. (c) ASIC Division C. (d) See note (c) to Table 1.